

“Keep Your Word! God Keeps His!”

Numbers Chapter 30

A generation or two ago, a handshake was all that was needed for even large money contracts. Originally, a handshake was form of a search for concealed weapons as enemies came together on a battlefield to agree on a truce. Today it seems that the handshake has lost it's intergety of a couple of generations ago and has returned to theoriginal distrust of enemies.

God in this chapter has a strong message concerning Oaths and Vows.

1) When a Man Makes an Oath or Vow vs 1-2

- Num 30:1 Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which the LORD has commanded.
- Num 30:2 "If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, **he shall not violate his word**; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.
- Throughout scripture we see that God places a very high priority on "Keeping Your Word"
 - Some people believe that Christians are not to make oaths.
 - Matthew 5:34-37 "But I say to you, **make no oath at all**, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.**"
 - People take this and say Jesus said to not take oaths. But the context is about raising the moral standard. To raise the standard from just "I gotta keep my promise" to being a person who does what he says. And concerning oaths that the integrity of a Christian is such that they shouldn't have to take oaths. They are those people who follow through.
 - James 5:12 "But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment."
 - Again James repeating Jesus' teaching is speaking about Christian Character. Our word should be proved time and time again to be true and trustworthy. We should not have to say "I swear to God" or "On my mother's grave."
 - Oaths and vows do not have to be formal pronouncements. They can be as simple as saying:
 - "I'll see you at seven."
 - "I'll be there."
 - "I can do that."
 - "Sign me up. I can do children's church."
 - Making oaths is not sin. God made oaths.
 - Luke 1:70-73 "As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, **The oath which He swore to Abraham our father**"
 - Acts 2:30 "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that **GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE**"
 - Hebrews 3:18 "to whom **did He swear** that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?"
 - Hebrews 6:13 "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, **He swore by Himself**"
 - We need to keep our word. Or don't give it.
 - Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 "When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay."

Num 30:3 2) When a Woman Makes an Oath or Vow vs 3-16

Young Woman in
Father's
Household

"Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth,

Num 30:4 and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand.

Num 30:5 "But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears *of it*, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her because her father had forbidden her.

- A young woman's vow is affirmed or disavowed by her father upon his hearing of it.
- So to make a vow with a young woman one should know it can be broken by her father.
- It is very important that her father's silence is actually saying more than one would know. Silence is affirming the vow, or course of action a child takes. Many a parent will remain silent on issues for their teenagers not wanting to interfere or persuade. But the law, just like the law of gravity is in work even if the parent is not aware of it. Silence is an affirmation.

Num 30:6 "However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself,

A Newly Married
Woman

Num 30:7 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears *it*, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand.

Num 30:8 "But if on the day her husband hears *of it*, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the LORD will forgive her.

- A woman who is under a vow and then in time is married, her husband is able to ratify or annul the vow.
 - KJV doesn't grant the idea that the original language grants of a marriage after a vow. The NKJV corrects this.
- In this day it may have been because of a more patriarchal society. That is one way of looking at it. Yet even in our society, in the eyes of God and His scripture the husband is still the head (authority) who answers to Christ for the family.
- This ratification is not so much about ability to make wise vows as it is authority and responsibility before God.

Num 30:9 "But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

Widow/Divorced

- A widow or a divorced woman is not under a man's authority but God's. Her vow stands by her own word.

Num 30:10 "However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath,

Married Woman

Num 30:11 and her husband heard *it*, but said nothing to her *and* did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand.

Num 30:12 "But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears *them*, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the LORD will forgive her.

Num 30:13 "Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it.

Num 30:14 "But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows

or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them.

Num 30:15 "But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt."

Num 30:16 These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, *as* between a man and his wife, *and as* between a father and his daughter, *while she is* in her youth in her father's house.

- A married woman's vow is ratified or annulled by her husband.
 - Some have considered this section to apply to the divorced woman. That the husband still has the authority to ratify or annul.
- The husband must annul the vow immediately upon hearing it. If not his silence is an affirmation.
- "*Annuls after he has heard them*" - means that he has previously affirmed them by words or by his silence. If he tries to break the vow afterwards he will bear the guilt.
 - Again speaking of the husband's authority as "head" comes with responsibility.

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